

*Soviet Special Operations**



Both the Karelian Front and the Northern Fleet employed special-purpose detachments, so named because their special mission was to strike targets behind the German lines. Two special operations were conducted in support of the Petsamo-Kirkenes Operation, one by special-purpose troops of the 14th Army and the other by a composite detachment of naval infantrymen and sailors from the Northern Fleet.

Karelian Front Special-Purpose Forces

In July 1944, the Front commander, General Meretskov, ordered several special-purpose detachments from an assault combat engineer brigade to be formed and prepared for operations deep in the German rear.¹ The men came from various engineer units, including the 6th Separate Guards Battalion of Demolition Specialists (6th *OGBM***), the 64th and 222d Motorized Assault Combat Engineer Battalions, and the 168th Army Engineer Battalion.² Once formed, all detachments were subordinated directly to the Karelian Front engineer staff, which was responsible for their support, training, and operational deployment.

After their selection and designation, the special-purpose detachments lived and trained apart from other units.³ The training program was designed to prepare the men both physically and psychologically for combat operations in the enemy rear.⁴ Training included exercises in conducting platoon- and company-size ambushes, organizing a battalion march in mountainous and swampy terrain, and preparing a reconnaissance detachment to encircle and destroy an enemy strongpoint. The men also trained in coordinating actions between subunits, conducting reconnaissance, placing demolitions on roads and bridges, and learning to navigate by terrain reference without compasses. Men experienced in operations behind

*The descriptions of the combat actions in this chapter are much more detailed than in previous chapters, which generally avoided tactical-level discussions. Special-purpose forces, however, despite their strategic- and operational-level missions, are normally tactical in size and method of employment. Such is the case in this historical example. Additionally, well-documented accounts of Soviet special operations from World War II are rare in the Western military press. These actions, therefore, merit the fullest possible exposure and discussion.

***Otdelnyi gvardeiskii batalon minerov.*

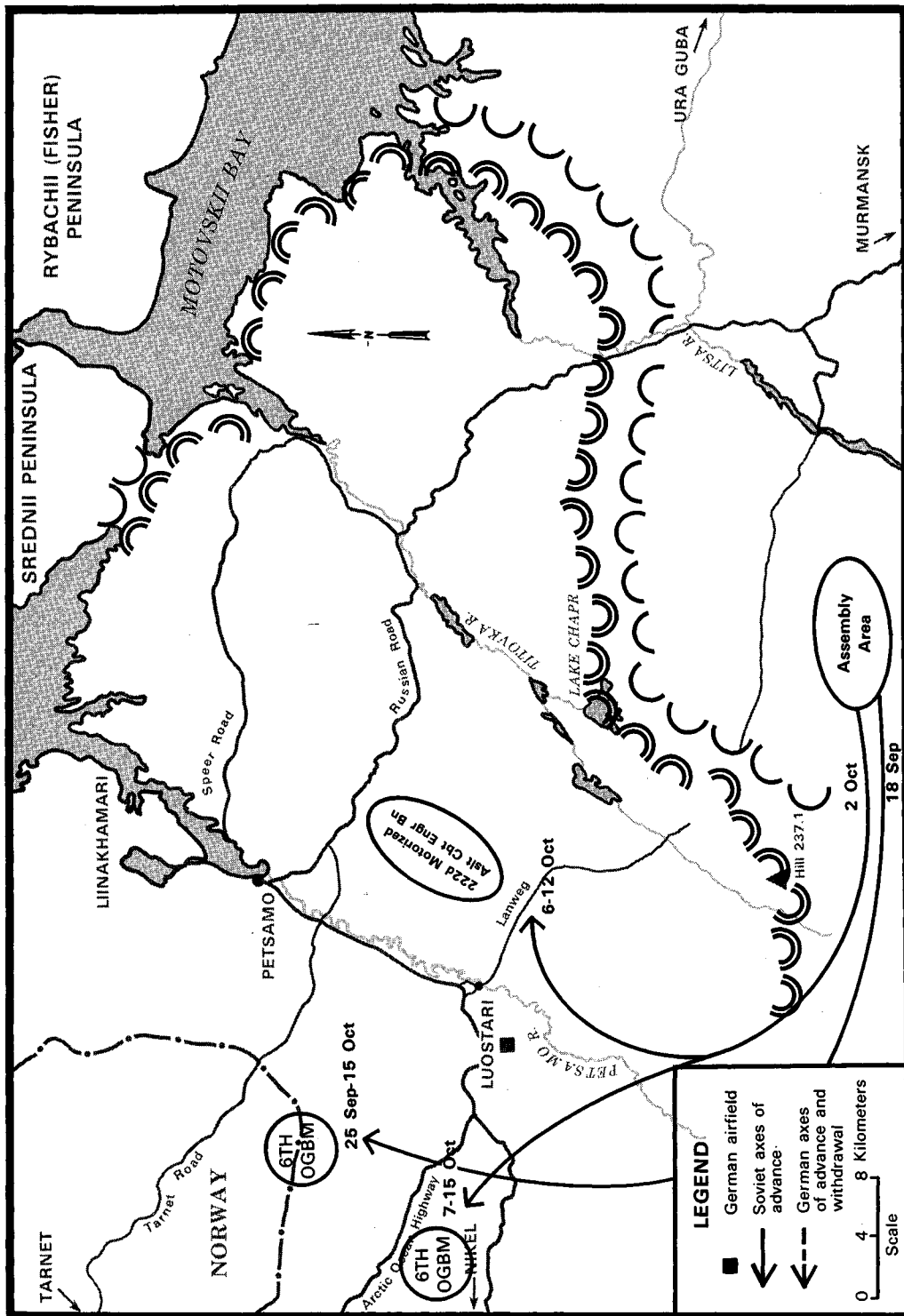
German lines were chosen to be the Communist Party and Komsomol leaders in companies and platoons. Their task was to ensure that each soldier was psychologically prepared to operate away from friendly forces, to endure physical and mental stress, and to be prepared for any sacrifice in order to accomplish the mission. Physical conditioning emphasized carrying heavy loads and fighting in hand-to-hand combat. In essence, all training exercises attempted to foster teamwork and comradeship among the soldiers.

In early September, Meretskov met with his chief of engineer troops, Lieutenant General A. F. Khrenov, and approved a plan for using special-purpose detachments to support the 14th Army's offensive.⁵ The plan called for inserting three special-purpose detachments into the German rear before the offensive was launched (see map 13). These detachments were to reconnoiter the route of the follow-on light rifle corps, conduct uninterrupted reconnaissance of the enemy and terrain, and gain control over the roadnet. On initiation of the offensive, special-purpose troops would assist the main attack by disrupting enemy command, control, and communications; destroying men and equipment; mining roads; and demolishing bridges. Lieutenant General Khrenov personally approved the combat actions plan of each detachment.⁶

The first detachment to deploy was the 6th *OGBM*, minus one company, commanded by Guards Major A. F. Popov.⁷ Most of the 133 men in the 6th carried submachine guns, four basic loads (600 rounds) of ammunition, and hand grenades. Additionally, the detachment carried 3 light machine guns, 3 sniper rifles with 600 rounds for each, explosives and fuses, 130 antitank mines, 10 delayed-action mines, 2 radios with 2 supplies of batteries for each, flare guns, medical supplies, and individual rations for 17 days. The average equipment load for each soldier in the detachment was 42 kilograms (92 pounds).

Popov's detachment departed its assembly area behind the Soviet 14th Army's left flank at 1400 on 18 September and began the long march around the German right flank. Popov used a reinforced platoon for his advance guard, a squad per company for flank guards, and a platoon for the rear guard. He and his command group marched at the front of the main body. Communication between companies was maintained by runners and light signals, within companies and platoons by voice and flags. The formation moved two kilometers per hour over the swampy and rocky tundra, halting for ten minutes each hour to rest. Until they reached the Titovka River, the men moved during the day and rested at night.

On the fourth day, at 1300 on 21 September, the detachment crossed the Titovka River. Moving now at night to avoid detection, Popov and his men waded across the icy cold, chest-deep, fifty-meter-wide Petsamo River. On the night of 23–24 September, they reached Nikel Road, along which flowed a steady stream of German traffic. At 0400 on 24 September, the detachment rapidly rushed across this dangerous obstacle and moved quickly to the north. Popov led his men to a small stream in a wooded



Map 13. 14th Army special-purpose actions

RUSSISCHER TARNANZUG

Russian Camouflage Suit



*Ansicht der Kapuze mit
zurückgeschlagenem Gesichtsschleier*

View of the hood with
the facial covering removed

Farbe: Olivgrün

a) Tarnbüschel aus Bast

b) grüner Mückenschleier

Color: Olive green

a) Camouflage tufts made from twigs

b) Green mosquito net

Anlage 4 zu (Geb) A O K 20 Ia
Nr 3300/43 geh. vom 4. 8. 43.

German microfilm records

A Soviet arctic camouflage suit, probably worn by Soviet snipers



Author's collection

Tarnet Road, built by Soviet prisoners of war in 1943

area near the Norwegian border, arriving on the morning of 25 September, and reported their arrival to Front headquarters by radio.

From this position, Popov's men conducted reconnaissance out as far as twenty-five kilometers, principally to Tarnet Road, Nikel Road, and Arctic Ocean Highway between Luostari and Akhmalakhti. His men studied traffic patterns and selected targets and ambush sites for subsequent combat actions. In the base camp, strict noise and light discipline was enforced. Not long after his arrival, Popov, to conserve rations, reduced portions to 50 percent. The frequent rain and snow showers kept the men wet and cold, which posed hazards to their health.

While Popov's detachment executed its reconnaissance mission, the remaining company of the 6th *OGBM* departed its assembly area on 2 October and moved toward its objective area northeast of Nikel. Led by Popov's deputy, Captain A. P. Kononenko, the 49-man detachment reached its operating base on the night of 7–8 October and established communications with the battalion's main force.

A third detachment, 108 men of the 222d Motorized Assault Combat Engineer Battalion, commanded by Major G. A. Gradov, also departed its assembly area on 2 October and, on 6 October, reached its objective area between Luostari and the Titovka River in the rear of the 2d Mountain

Division. This detachment of five platoons deployed along Lanweg and Russian Road.

Several hours before the 14th Army's attack on 7 October, all three special-purpose detachments received orders by radio to begin combat actions. A platoon of Gradov's 222d Battalion struck the first blow, attacking an isolated outpost of the 2d Mountain Division at 1900 on 6 October, fourteen kilometers east of Luostari on Lanweg.⁸

Popov's detachment also went into action quickly. His first priority was to destroy the wire communications between the German rear area and frontline units, thus forcing the enemy units to use the radio and, under the intense pressure of combat, use noncoded text. Second, he was to destroy the bridges on all three roads controlled by his battalion. On the night of 6–7 October, Popov's detachment deployed in three groups, one to each road, and destroyed communications wire, blew up bridges, and planted mines. After all three groups had returned to base by dawn on 7 October, Major Popov reported to Front headquarters and then moved his base camp several kilometers to the west.

The cold, rainy weather and rough terrain were extracting a heavy toll on Popov's men. Weakened by exhaustion, hunger, and cold, forty could no longer fight and were sent back toward Soviet lines. The remaining ninety-plus men continued their nightly raids. A sabotage group blew up the bridge at Kilometer 28 of Tarnet Road, destroying one truck, and damaged a bridge and destroyed several power-line poles at Kilometer 486 (west of Luostari before the road fork) of Arctic Ocean Highway.⁹

On the night of 7–8 October, Captain Kononenko's unit made its first raid along the road several kilometers east of Nikel. In this attack, his troops took out several hundred meters of telephone line and planted mines that later destroyed two German fuel trucks. By 10 October, the Twentieth Army headquarters had identified Major Popov's battalion and knew its general location. Recorded in a German war diary are reports of the "employment of a 150–200 man element with a sabotage mission in the area between the Eismeer Strasse [Arctic Ocean Highway] and the Tarnet-Kirkenes road," which succeeded in disrupting traffic along the main supply routes in the area. The diary later specifically identified one sabotage group as an element of the "6th Independent Guards Detachment (Sabotage)."¹⁰

Major Gradov and his five platoons of the 222d Battalion continued to attack isolated German units and positions in front of the advancing 99th and 131st Rifle Corps, rejoining the main force on 12 October, the day Luostari was captured. In six separate attacks, Gradov's men destroyed 3,600 meters of telephone line, blew up two bridges, and killed over 150 German soldiers; Gradov's unit suffered only three lightly wounded.¹¹

Major Popov's 6th *OGBM* continued its operations against retreating German columns. On the nights of 11–14 October, low-flying aircraft delivered urgently needed supplies of food, ammunition, and warm clothing to Popov's men. As the encirclement of the German right flank and the capture of Luostari on 12 October began to force the Germans to withdraw



Author's collection

Wreckage of a German staff car along Tarnet Road

into Norway toward Tarnet, Popov increased his attacks along Tarnet Road. His men stopped traffic at numerous defiles and streams with mines and demolitions and, on more than one occasion, directed air strikes against concentrations of German units. General Jodl, commander of the XIX Mountain Corps, recorded that, on 13 October, the 6th Mountain Division had to deploy combat elements against the Soviet 6th Guards Special Engineer Detachment, which had occupied a sector of road.¹²

After a final successful attack along Tarnet Road on 15 October, in which his troops expended all their ammunition, Major Popov led his entire battalion back into Soviet positions, which by then were west of Petsamo and Luostari. In eight days of active combat, Popov's battalion had destroyed more than eleven kilometers of telephone wire, four bridges, and large amounts of German equipment and troops. His battalion's losses were only four wounded and two missing in action.¹³

In analyzing the Karelian Front's employment of special-purpose units, it is important to realize that the use of sabotage troops behind German lines was nothing new or extraordinary. Soviet troops had been conducting raids and reconnaissance in German rear areas since the first weeks of the war back in 1941. By mid-1944, the Soviet unconventional war against the German Army was extremely well organized and played a significant role

in all major Soviet offensive operations. However, the employment of special-purpose detachments for rear area combat was distinctly different in the arctic region. The weather and terrain were severe; the terrain provided almost no cover and concealment; and no indigenous civilians were available to provide logistic, intelligence, or partisan support.

The combat experience of the 6th *OGBM* and the 222d Motorized Assault Combat Engineer Battalion in special operations prior to autumn 1944 is unknown. However, that they were engineer-based units and reported to the Front chief of engineer troops, not the intelligence staff, is significant. Since they were trained to strike enemy troops and installations, their reconnaissance skills were important, but mainly for acquiring targets for immediate destruction. Engineer troops, more so than the infantry, were likely to have the individual and collective skills and equipment necessary for demolitions work. Furthermore, ordinary engineer units could have provided a plentiful supply of trained manpower for special-purpose units.

Not only were these special-purpose detachments well trained, but their plan of action was well executed. The method of insertion—walking—although slow, was probably the most secure, and it served the additional purpose of reconnoitering a route for the important follow-on force, the 126th Light Rifle Corps. The selection of an operating base adjacent to Norwegian territory and continuous reconnaissance and combat activities on Norwegian territory *prior to* 18 October, when Meretskov received permission to send conventional forces across the border into Norway, indicates that military requirements for unconventional warfare took precedence over political sensitivities. It cannot be determined from available sources if the Karelian Front commander had to gain approval from *STAVKA* to deploy special-purpose forces into Norway.

Disregarding the time required for the deepest-penetrating detachment to reach its position (Major Popov's group), the Soviet special-purpose units were functioning forty to fifty kilometers deep in German-occupied territory for twelve days before the main offensive. Although the Soviet troops moved about only at night and hid during the day, they reported their actions to Front headquarters by regular radio transmissions, two per day before 7 October and every two hours thereafter. That the Soviets avoided German detection for such a long period of time in terrain known for its lack of cover says much about the Soviets' excellent camouflage and movement security and also about the poor German rear area security. To be willing to place 133 men so deep behind enemy lines almost two weeks before an offensive attests to the Front headquarters' confidence in their military skills and their political reliability, which was just as important for soldiers of the special-purpose units.

In terms of depth, the special-purpose detachments operated in a broad zone that extended from the German regimental rear to corps rear, from eight to fifty kilometers behind the front line. Their reconnaissance and combat activities were directed more at communications and transportation facilities and targets than at combat forces. However, if they did come upon an unsecured artillery battery, the special-purpose troops would not hesitate

to attack. Also, on a few occasions, these detachments would occupy a piece of key terrain and then would repulse a German unit seeking to use the same terrain without first conducting its own reconnaissance.

The employment of special-purpose forces in support of the ground offensive was extremely effective. In terms of their mission, they reconnoitered the route for the 126th Light Rifle Corps and conducted continuous reconnaissance of the enemy and terrain. Their control of the roadnet was never total but certainly adequate considering the hardships imposed by cold, wet weather; rough terrain; and a formidable enemy. German war diary accounts do not contain sufficient evidence to validate or refute the claims made in Soviet sources about the quantities of German troops, equipment, and installations killed or damaged. But that reports of Soviet special-purpose force actions appeared at all in Twentieth Army records is testimony to the German commanders' concern for this unanticipated and unwelcome battle in their rear area.

Two Soviet commanders praised the special-purpose units highly. Lieutenant General Khrenov, the chief of engineer troops in the Karelian Front, wrote the following in 1982:

Of course, these forms of combat behind the front line did not determine the success of the offensive. But I have considered it my duty to write about the sapper-scouts in order to more fully expose this little-known type of activity of engineer troops, which demanded special moral-combat qualities and permitted the inflicting on the enemy of great losses with small forces.¹⁴

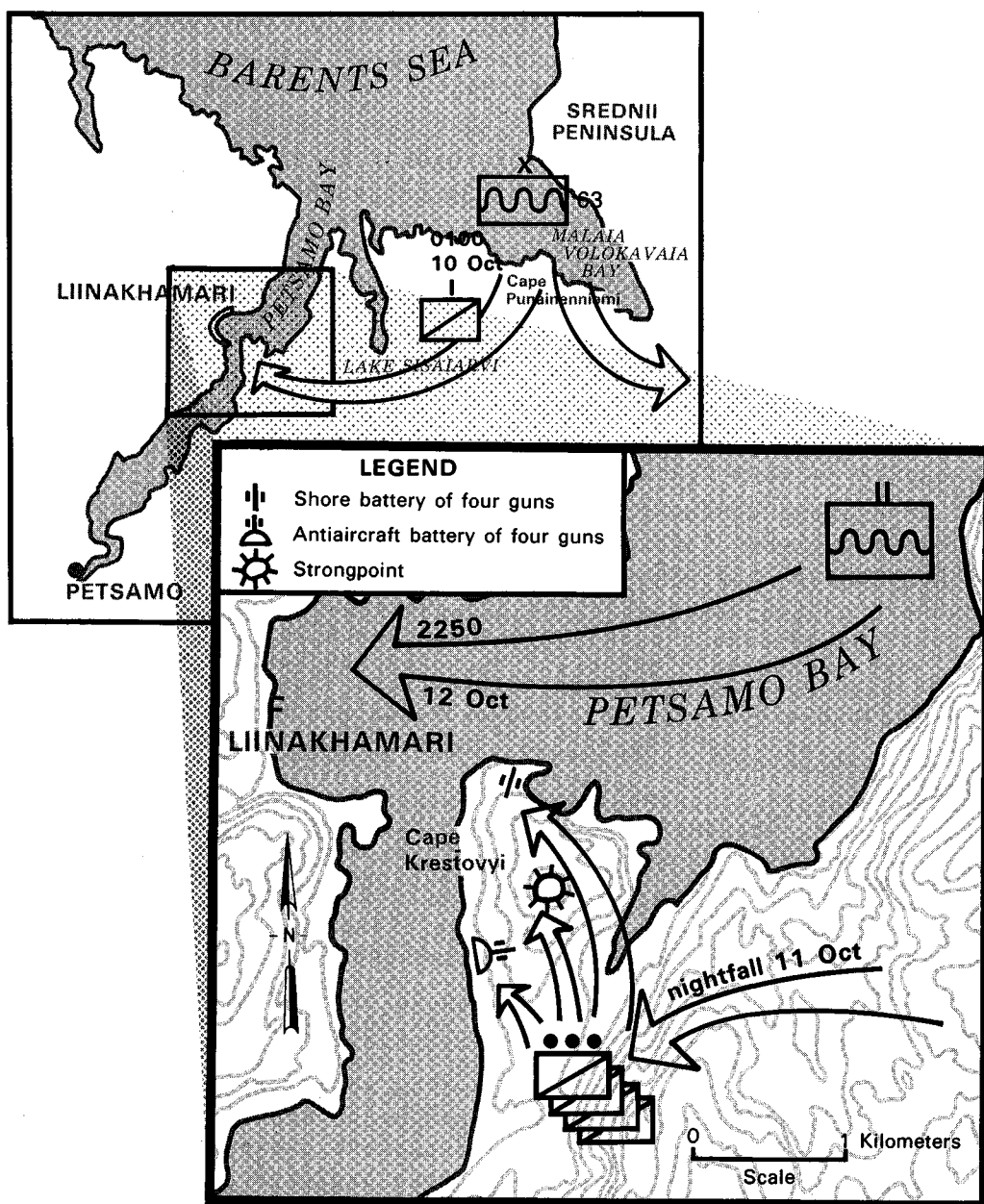
Marshal Meretskov, the Karelian Front commander, expressed similar thoughts:

From these detachments was gained valuable information, which kept the command informed of changes that were occurring in the enemy's defenses. In addition, the sappers controlled the roads, blew up bridges, and destroyed telephone lines, causing disorder in the work of German rear services. Finally, on more than one occasion, they directed our close air and bomber aviation to concentrations of enemy troops.¹⁵

Naval Special Operations

During the planning for Northern Fleet support to the 14th Army's ground offensive, the Main Naval Staff in Moscow ordered Admiral Golovko to reestablish a Soviet naval base at Petsamo.¹⁶ Pursuant to this order, Golovko's staff began to plan an amphibious landing at Liinakhamari, the small port north of Petsamo on the west shore of Petsamo Bay. A battery of four German 150-mm guns, positioned on the northern shore of Cape Krestovyi, controlled the entrance to the bay (see map 14). For the main landing force to succeed, these guns had to be neutralized.

To accomplish this task, the fleet assembled a composite force of naval infantrymen and sailors from the Northern Defensive Region reconnaissance detachment, commanded by Captain I. P. Barchenko-Emelianov, and the Northern Fleet reconnaissance detachment, commanded by Senior Lieutenant V. N. Leonov. An experienced naval infantryman, Barchenko-Emelianov had



Map 14. Krestovyi raid, 11–12 October 1944

served in reconnaissance units of the 12th Naval Infantry Brigade in the Murmansk area since November 1941. In June 1943, he took command of the Northern Defensive Region reconnaissance detachment, a collection of naval infantrymen who were veteran scouts of many reconnaissance and raid operations against German units and positions along the coast of occupied Finnish and Soviet territory.¹⁷

Hero of the Soviet Union, Captain I. P. Barchenko-Emelianov, commander of the reconnaissance detachment of Headquarters, Northern Defensive Region



VAAP

Leonov, on the other hand, and most of his detachment were sailors, volunteers from the several surface and submarine units of the Northern Fleet. Having participated in many operations behind German lines on Soviet, Finnish, and Norwegian territory, the detachment had a distinguished combat record dating back to its creation in July 1941 by Admiral Golovko.¹⁸ Leonov, himself a veteran of submarine service, came to the detachment in the late summer of 1941. Courage and leadership displayed in battle earned him a promotion to officer rank in late 1942 and to commander of the detachment in late 1943.¹⁹

As commander of the composite detachment, Barchenko-Emelianov received his first specific mission statement on 11 September when Leonov and his men joined the composite unit.²⁰ Other attachments included a team of artillerymen from the 113th Separate Artillery Battalion, a group of combat engineers from the 338th Separate Combat Engineer Battalion, and an unspecified number of medics and radio operators—a total strength of 195 men. For the next four weeks, the composite detachment trained and rehearsed its mission at Rybachii Peninsula, which had terrain similar to Cape Krestovyi's. The detachment's final preparations included coordinating with the naval aviators who would later support them.



Twice Hero of the Soviet Union, Senior Lieutenant V. N. Leonov, commander of the reconnaissance detachment of Headquarters, Northern Fleet (shown here after his first award)

On the evening of 9 October, the composite detachment boarded two small subchasers and a torpedo cutter. This raiding party, as part of a larger force of approximately 30 vessels and 2,800 men, approached the German-held southern shore of Malaia Volokovaia Bay. While the main force, the 63d Naval Infantry Brigade, landed and attacked to the south and east, the composite detachment of raiders were to land and march to the southwest. After breaking off from the main force, these three small ships reached Cape Punainenniemi, their designated landing area, at 0100 on 10 October. Under cover of darkness and a smoke screen, and despite enemy shore battery fire aided by searchlights, the detachment got ashore with no personnel casualties and the loss of only one of its five radios. Once established on shore, it reported its status to fleet headquarters and then began the cross-country march (see map 14).

Moving undetected was difficult because the terrain in this region was sparsely vegetated, rocky, mountainous, and interspersed with streams and lakes. Elevations of over 1,000 feet were found 2 to 3 kilometers inland from the Barents Sea. On the night of 9–10 October 1944, during and after the landing, the temperature hovered around freezing, with a strong wind blowing in from the sea. The group moved inland that night in a snowstorm that had turned to rain by morning. So as not to be detected easily and to

blend in with the grey-brown surroundings, the men removed their white camouflage smocks.

All day on 10 October, the men hid in rock caves and only moved again at dusk. At daybreak on 11 October, Captain Barchenko-Emelianov hid his men in a growth of bushes at the southern end of Lake Sisaiarvi. In eighteen hours, they had marched just fifteen kilometers. After a rest period, they continued to move at twilight. By nightfall, they had reached a spur on Petsamo Bay, from which they could observe the silhouette of their target, Cape Krestovyi. Beyond the cape, they could see the port of Liinakhamari across the bay. The men were standing at the top of a vertical cliff, from which their descent took six hours.

The plan for the Cape Krestovyi assault was simple (see map 14). Leonov's 95-man group would assault the battery of four 88-mm antiaircraft guns sited on a gentle slope on the southern portion of the cape. Two of Barchenko-Emelianov's platoons would attack and seize the strongpoint located 300 meters north of the flak battery. This position in the center of the cape guarded the landward approaches to the 150-mm coastal battery. His remaining platoon would storm the four-gun shore battery located at the water's edge on the northernmost shore of the cape.

After a brief leaders' orientation, which included an oral order, the three elements moved off into the darkness to await the attack signal. It is unclear whether the attackers or the startled German defenders fired the signal rocket that triggered the assault.²¹ In either case, the Soviets had the element of surprise. Leonov's men were crawling through the barbed wire forty to fifty meters from the 88-mm guns when the rocket went up, followed by German-fired illumination. Leonov and his men quickly breached the barbed wire and assaulted the bunkers and, in hand-to-hand combat, killed or drove off the crews, seizing the four-gun battery. Leonov's detachment spent the rest of the night fending off numerous German counterattacks, his attached artillerymen firing the captured guns.

Platoons commanded by two naval infantry lieutenants also quickly overwhelmed the German defenders in the strongpoint. German survivors from both the flak battery and strongpoint positions withdrew singly and in groups northward along the cape into the 150-mm battery positions. While Barchenko-Emelianov was establishing his command post in the strongpoint position, his remaining platoon was assaulting the by-now fully alerted 150-mm shore battery position. Well-dug-in Germans in bunkers and trenches behind barbed wire repulsed Soviet attempts to take the battery from the landward side. The Soviets sent an element around the western flank to attack along the rocky shore, but this group was driven back by the incoming tide. According to one Soviet source, the besieged Germans began to destroy their own guns, while Leonov contends that these same guns were firing against his men in support of a German counterattack.²² Unable at this time to either capture or destroy the guns, Barchenko-Emelianov reported the situation to his headquarters.

At dawn on 12 October, the Germans remaining on the cape regrouped and launched a counterattack. According to German war diary entries, as

well as Soviet sources, these counterattacks were supported by German troops sent across the harbor in assault boats.²³ All available German indirect-fire support assets were also directed against the Soviet raiding force, thus resulting in serious casualties. Outnumbered and unable to hold the flak battery positions, Leonov withdrew his men to a nearby hill. To render the 88-mm guns inoperable, the artillerymen removed and took the breechblocks with them.

As the counterattacking Germans approached the strongpoint position where Barchenko-Emelianov and his detachment were holding out, on-call Soviet naval aviation assets came in and restored the situation. In the course of four hours, Northern Fleet pilots delivered ten air strikes and several parachute containers of ammunition and provisions.²⁴ In addition, Soviet ground artillery from Srednii Peninsula conducted counterbattery fire throughout the day, helping to defeat several German counterattacks.

By midday on 12 October, the Soviet positions in the center of the cape were secure enough for Barchenko-Emelianov to give Leonov one platoon plus two squads to bolster Leonov's position overlooking the flak battery. With these reinforcements, Leonov and his men counterattacked. By dusk, they had retaken the position and the adjacent shore, depriving the Germans of the ability to reinforce on that flank.²⁵ Some isolated groups of Germans were captured, while others found their way northward to the shore battery position. By nightfall, except for an occasional burst of gunfire, the area was quiet.

At about 2000, Barchenko-Emelianov received a radio message that an amphibious landing force would assault the Liinakhamari harbor in three hours. Between 2250 and 2400 on 12 October, approximately 600 men landed in three waves from eight torpedo cutters and six subchasers.²⁶ By all accounts, this landing force was detected, illuminated, and fired on by several German shore batteries. The key battery on Cape Krestovyi did not engage the amphibious landing force, either because its guns had been destroyed or it was preoccupied with Barchenko-Emelianov's renewed assaults. All Soviet accounts credit the success of the landings in the harbor to the raiders' actions.²⁷

During the night of 12–13 October, the raiders were reinforced by a company from the 63d Naval Infantry Brigade that had participated in the night landing of 9–10 October. These men came in overland from the east. An additional platoon came ashore from a disabled cutter. Before dawn on 13 October, Barchenko-Emelianov selected a German officer from among his prisoners and sent him into the shore battery position with a surrender demand. After some delay, the garrison of seventy-eight officers and men surrendered.

The detachment spent the day of 13 October looking after the prisoners and captured equipment. That night, the entire detachment was taken across the bay into Liinakhamari to assist in the mopping-up actions, which were completed by midday on 14 October. In three days of battle for Krestovyi and Liinakhamari, the detachments of Senior Lieutenant Leonov and Captain



Leonov with his men after the raid on Cape Krestovyi

Barchenko-Emelianov lost fifty-three men killed and wounded, or 27 percent of their 195-man force. Barchenko-Emelianov, Leonov, and two enlisted men were awarded the gold star and title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

The raid by naval special-purpose forces against the German positions on Cape Krestovyi was not an unusual event. Both reconnaissance detachments that combined to execute the Krestovyi raid were experienced, having conducted similar attacks on other enemy objectives throughout 1941–44.

Several aspects of the mission are worth noting, however. The two units came together, along with their attachments, about thirty days prior to their commitment. They trained and rehearsed on terrain specially chosen for its similarity to the objective. The insertion of the force onto the enemy shore was cleverly masked by the much larger brigade-size landing to the east. The composite detachment walked the extremely difficult route to the objective area. Although physically demanding and time-consuming, this was perhaps the only way to reach the target and maintain the advantage of surprise.

Often, in special operations, small-unit commanders have only as much information as they need to accomplish their immediate tasks. Barchenko-Emelianov undoubtedly knew that an amphibious landing was planned at Liinakhamari, but his superiors communicated to him the actual time of the amphibious assault only three to four hours before it occurred. Had the raid failed and he or Leonov been captured, the Germans would have gained little of immediate intelligence value from them.

The chain of command from Barchenko-Emelianov to the fleet commander passed through a single intermediate headquarters, the Northern Defensive Region, commanded by Major General E. T. Dubovtsev. This headquarters was responsible for the raiders' artillery support. The aerial resupply and close air support, meanwhile, came from the Northern Fleet commander's assets. Admiral Golovko personally monitored the progress of the raid and met with the surviving members of the composite detachment in the dock area of Liinakhamari on the day after that small port village was captured.

The raid on Cape Krestovyi was the last combat action of the war for Barchenko-Emelianov's naval infantry reconnaissance detachment. Leonov and his men made a final journey to Varanger Peninsula in the closing days of October, where they were welcomed as liberators. The Krestovyi raid remains an outstanding example of the maturity in planning, training, organizing, and executing of special operations by Soviet naval personnel in the latter stages of World War II.
